

Charles Perry House  
564 Harbor Road  
Southport  
Fairfield County  
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-306

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CONN,  
1-SOUPD,  
18-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-306

CHARLES PERRY HOUSE

Location: 564 Harbor Road (north side of street), Southport,  
Fairfield County, Connecticut

USGS Westport Quadrangle Map; Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 18.644155.4554800

Present Owner  
and Occupant: John A. and Sharan K. Millington

Present Use: Residence

Statement of  
Significance: The Charles Perry house was erected circa 1822-30  
upon the ridge over-looking Mill River Harbor. The  
residence is a proper culmination of Federal style  
architecture in Southport. The structure's delicate,  
Adamesque details set against its large classical  
proportions create a stunning composition which is  
an asset to the period's American vernacular. The  
leaded tracery of the lights framing the main entry,  
the fluted Ionic columns of the front portico, and  
the classical architrave and cornice articulating  
the eaves of the main section are patterned after  
the high-style architecture of the period. Charles  
Perry was a wealthy nineteenth-century shipowner and  
sea captain, and a prominent figure within the com-  
munity.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1822-30. Charles Perry acquired the land upon which the house stands in September 1821. He was then twenty-six years old and unmarried. It is improbable that he would have built a residence of these proportions at the age of twenty-six or prior to his marriage circa 1830-33. The house was designed with the roof ridge parallel to the street rather than the gable facing front. This feature is characteristic of Federal style building in Southport and the Fairfield vicinity prior to 1830; the front facing gable is a feature which is characteristic of the area's Greek Revival style architecture after 1830.
2. Architect: No information available.

3. Original and subsequent owners: References to the chain of title to the property upon which the structure stands are in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield.
  - 1821 Deed, September 1 1821, recorded in Volume 38, page 105. Albert Beers to Charles Perry, for consideration of \$600.
  - 1901 Will, Maria Perry, daughter, to Southport Congregational Church.
  - 1926 Deed, October 5, 1926, recorded in Volume 123, page 142. Southport Congregational Church to Egbert C. Hadley.
  - 1936 Quit claim deed, April 17, 1936, recorded in Volume 161, page 59. Egbert C. Hadley to Margaret C. Hadley.
  - 1950 Deed, December 11, 1950, recorded in Volume 258, page 195-96. Egbert C. Hadley and Margaret Finch to H. Smith Richardson, Jr.
  - 1964 Deed, June 2, 1964, recorded in Book 467, page 556, and August 28, 1964, recorded in Book 472, page 149. H. Smith Richardson and Adele Q. to John A. and Sharan K. Millington.
4. Alterations and additions: The Fairfield "Advertiser" reported on April 26, 1889 that "Miss Maria Perry [daughter] is building an addition to her house." This addition is probably the two-story section at the rear, forming an L-shaped plan. The house was acquired by Egbert C. Hadley in 1926 and under the direction of architect Cameron Clark many alterations to the structure's original fabric were completed. A two-story bay window on the front (south) elevation and a wooden front porch were removed; the original kitchen was remodelled as the living room and a new kitchen was built into a section of the original dining room; three bathrooms and a half-bath were installed on the second floor; two bedrooms and a bath were finished in the attic; new plumbing, heating and electrical systems were also installed.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Structure:

Charles C. Perry (1795-1870) was a wealthy nineteenth-century shipowner and sea captain and a prominent figure within Southport's community. He and his wife Sarah had two children - Miah, who died at the age of seventeen, and Maria, who inherited her parent's residence upon her mother's death in 1882.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Fairfield County Deed Records, Office of the Recorder,  
Fairfield Town Hall, Fairfield Connecticut.

Letter from Egbert C. Hadley to Fairfield Historic  
District Commission, September 24, 1965.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Fairfield "Advertiser," April 26, 1889.

Fairfield Historic District Commission, Final Report:  
Establishment of Historic Districts in Greenfield  
Hill and Southport. Fairfield, 1966.

Prepared by Jan E. Cigliano  
Staff Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
December 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Charles Perry residence, erected circa 1822-30, is a proper culmination of Federal style architecture in Southport. The structure's delicate, Adamesque details set against its large classical proportions create a stunning composition which is an asset to the period's American vernacular. The leaded tracery of the lights framing the main entry, the fluted Ionic columns of the front portico, and the classical architrave and cornice which articulate the eaves of the main section are patterned after the high-style architecture of the early 1800s.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. The structure is presently in need of paint and minor repairs.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This L-shaped structure is two stories with an attic and basement. The main section measures 45' (five-bay front facade) x 40'; the section added to the rear (north) elevation measure 20' x 30'.
2. Foundations: Rubble masonry faced with ashlar granite, finely cut and laid in regular courses.
3. Wall construction, finish, color: Front (south) facade is covered with flush butt-boardings. Horizontal clapboarding is on all other facades. The entire structure is painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Timber frame construction. The two-story front portico is a part of the principal gable, supported by a cantilevered roof construction.
5. Porches, porticos: A two-story portico extends across the front (south) facade and is four feet deep. Because of the cantilevered roof construction, the six fluted columns which define the five bays are decorative rather than structural members. The base (plinth) of the column rests on a plain block, forming a double plinth or scamillus. The fluting is formed by attaching wooden convex strips to plain hollow wooden shafts. The carved wooden capitals are styled in the Roman Ionic order with two volutes on each of the four sides.
6. Chimneys: Four large brick chimneys rise above the roof close to the ridge; two are on the front (south) slope at each gable end and two are on the rear (north) slope at each gable end. A chimney is on the rear L section.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Central front entry doorway is styled in the Adamesque manner. The door is flanked by fluted Ionic pilasters, ornate side lights, and an identical pair of pilasters. The side lights have leaded-glass tracery on the top half and molded wooden panels on the lower half. A large semi-elliptical fan-light with a voluted keystone crowns the doorway. There are two doors with simple molding at the rear.
  - b. Windows: Full-length windows with nine-over-nine light double-hung sash are on the south and west first-floor facades of the main section. Six-over-six light double-hung sash windows are on the second level of the main

section. The second-floor central window above the main entry is a tripartite window divided by fluted pilasters. Six Ionic pilasters on the front facade correspond to the portico columns and define the five bays. All windows have projecting molded cornices overhead, wooden sills and louvred shutters. A semi-circular fanlight with radiating mullions pierce each gable end.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable with ridge running east-west, parallel to the street. The roof is covered with wooden shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The entablature which articulates the roof eave and gable pediment at each end is of fine-scaled proportions. According to classical definitions, it is incomplete, being without an architrave. The frieze is ornamented with five-shank triglyphs, regularly spaced with eight to each bay. Sawed-out modillions, corresponding to each triglyph, are attached to the relatively plain cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: Four corner rooms around a central stair-hall in the main section.
- b. Second floor: Four rooms around a central stairhall.

2. Stairways: The main stairway in the central entry hall has two runs with a ninety-degree turn. A thin rail is supported by plain balusters. This is the only remaining staircase.
3. Flooring: Oak boards, two inches wide and of random length. They are of recent date.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are papered and ceiling is plaster. Original baseboards and ceiling cornice are in the front parlor. Wainscoting and built-in cabinets in the stairhall and dining room are of recent date.
5. Doorways and doors: Doors are thin and paneled. A corner-block molding with carved rosettes frames the doorways.
6. Hardware: Simple brass fittings are on all doors.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south overlooking Mill River Harbor and sits upon a ridge which slopes north from Harbor Road.
2. Historic landscaping: None.
3. Outbuildings: None.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Southport Historic District Commission, several members of whom provided the necessary funds. The project was completed in the summer of 1966 under the general direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS; Ralph Schwarz of the Ford Foundation; and Architect John C. Waite (Columbia University); with assistant architects Christopher Benninger (Harvard University), Richard Haines (University of Kentucky), and Andrew Craig Morrison (University of Michigan), and architectural historian David T. VanZanten (Harvard University), at the HABS Field Office in Southport, Connecticut. The data was prepared and edited in HABS Washington office in December 1978 by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1966.

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National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127



HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to  
CHARLES PERRY HOUSE

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(Page 7)

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This is an addendum to six data pages previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

Location: 564 Harbor Road (north side of street), Southport,  
Fairfield County, Connecticut

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Coordinates: 18.644155.4554800

The following information corrects and adds to the information already transmitted for the Perry House.

In regards to page 1, Part I., A, 1, the building date of the house is found in the Journals of Jonathan Bulkley: "Charles Perrys House was raised Teusday [sic] May 27th, 1823, at which Mr. Ezra Godfrey brok [sic] his leg and Sherwin [probably "Sherwood"] wounded himself." (Journals of Jonathan Bulkley, 1802-1826, December 1844-1858, edited by V. Louise Higgins, published by The Pequot Library, Southport, Connecticut, 1983). Although Charles Perry did not marry until December 29, 1831 (to Sarah Fitch Chidsey of New Haven), it is possible that he built the house to be "on his own" once the stewardship given to him in his father's will was discharged.

Charles Perry was a son of Miah Perry and Elizabeth (Dimon). Of the seven children of the marriage, five survived at the time of Miah's death, February 11, 1814: Charles (1795-1870), Julia (1798-1821), Hetty/Mehitabel (1801-1859), Henry (1807-1846), and Francis Dimon (1809-1884). Miah Perry's will (Fairfield Probate 29:12/1814) stipulated that in order to keep the family together, the family was to stay at the "present residence" (corner of Main and Harbor Road, HABS No. CT-294), for five years from Miah's decease if neither of the daughters married; "but in case they remain unmarried at the expiration of five years...my estate shall not be divided until eight years from my decease unless one of the said daughters should marry...partition may be immediately thereafter made."

Daughter Julia died January 10, 1821. The other daughter, Hetty/Mehitabel, married Frederick Marquand on September 3, 1822. Charles Perry's responsibility to his sisters was fulfilled. The homestead was sold in 1822 to Jesup Wakeman (38:375 and 38:273/1822). The brothers Perry probably boarded for a short while in the environs, as was the custom of the time. The old homestead became the Mill River Hotel for 1822-23.

The 1830 census shows the houses occupied. Charles Perry is enumerated between Sturges Nichols (534 Harbor Road) and Jeremiah Sturges (608 Harbor Road), the exact site of #564. The inhabitants listed at the house at the time are interpreted as follows:

- a. 2 males, 20-30; Francis Dimon and Henry Perry, both of whom married in 1831. Dimon went to 678 Pequot Avenue (HABS No. CT-317), while Henry went to 45 Westway Road (HABS No. CT-305). The houses were built in the 1830s.

- b. 1 male 30-40; Charles Perry, age 35 in 1830.
- c. 2 females; unidentified, but probably female relatives and/or servants running the house until Charles' marriage.

In regards to page 2, 3. 1821 deed, volume 38:105, it should read "Abel Beers and Elizabeth, husband and wife" to Charles Perry. The inclusion of the wife is important in tracing the land. The property came to Abel Beers through marriage to Elizabeth Whitney, who inherited the land from her father Peter Whitney. The acreage is part of the original grant in the Rampasture from the Town of Fairfield to John Barlow, 1750. In 1772 Barlow sold the property to Increase Bradley and Peter Whitney, and by 1789 the land was in the hands of peter Whitney. Whitney died in 1790, and the property descended to his daughter Elizabeth, who married Abel Beers circa 1808.

This information was provided by correspondence to HABS from V. Louise Higgins, 29 Prospect Lane, Southport, Connecticut, January 20, 1987.

Prepared and transmitted by: Holly K. Chamberlain, Historian  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
May 20, 1987